

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please amend Claims 1, 3, 5, and 22 through 25 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An image-forming system comprising:

a plurality of image-forming apparatuses with printing units, each image-forming apparatus comprising (a) a network communication unit and (b) a storage unit adapted to store image data and operation mode data received through the network communication unit;

a data acquisition unit through which a first image-forming apparatus of said plurality of image-forming apparatuses acquires, through the network communication unit, the image data and the operation mode data stored in another image-forming apparatus of said plurality of image-forming apparatuses, according to a request from a user of said first image-forming apparatus, the request being made by the user of said first image-forming apparatus via a user interface that displays to the user information about the image data stored in said another image-forming apparatus, the information being obtained from said another image-forming apparatus in response to use by the user of the user interface; and

an operation mode update unit adapted to automatically update the operation mode of the first image-forming apparatus to an operation mode in accordance with the acquired operation mode data.

2. (Original) An image-forming system according to claim 1, wherein the operation mode update unit updates the operation mode, and the acquired image data and the operation mode data are erased after the acquired image data is printed out.

3. (Currently Amended) An image-forming system comprising:
a plurality of image-forming apparatuses with printing units, each image-forming apparatus comprising (a) a network communication unit and (b) a storage unit adapted to store image data and operation mode data received through the network communication unit;
a data acquisition unit through which a first image-forming apparatus of said plurality of image-forming apparatus acquires, through the network communication unit, the image data and the operation mode data stored in another image-forming apparatus of said plurality of image-forming apparatus, according to a request from a user of said first image-forming apparatus, the request being made by the user of said first image-forming apparatus via a user interface that displays to the user information about the image data stored in said another image-forming apparatus, the information being obtained from said another image-forming apparatus in response to use by the user of the user interface; and
an operation mode update unit adapted to update the operation mode of the first image-forming apparatus to an operation mode in accordance with the acquired operation mode data in response to a command by the user of said first image-forming apparatus from a control panel of the first image-forming apparatus.

4. (Original) An image-forming system according to claim 3, wherein the operation mode update unit updates the operation mode, and the acquired image data and the operation mode data are erased after the acquired image data is printed out.

5. (Currently Amended) An image-forming apparatus that communicates data, via a data communication medium, with a remote image-forming apparatus storing image data for printing, said image-forming apparatus comprising:

means for displaying, to a user of said image-forming apparatus, information about the image data stored in the remote image-forming apparatus, the information being obtained from the remote image-forming apparatus in response to use by the user of said image-forming apparatus of a user interface, and for prompting the user of said image-forming apparatus to select ~~therefrom~~ image data stored in the remote image-forming apparatus for printing by said image-forming apparatus;

a transmitter adapted to transmit, to the remote image-forming apparatus via the data communication medium, a first data request requesting that the remote image-forming apparatus transmit, to the image-forming apparatus, image data stored in the remote image-forming apparatus, in accordance with the selection made by the user of said image forming apparatus; and

an acquisition unit adapted to acquire, via the data communication medium, data output by the remote image-forming apparatus in response to the data request, the data including operation mode data preset for the image data stored in the remote image-forming apparatus.

6. (Original) An image-forming apparatus according to claim 5, further comprising a display controller adapted to display, on a display unit, the operation mode data transmitted from the remote image-forming apparatus and acquired through the acquisition unit.

7. (Original) An image-forming apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the acquisition unit acquires, via the data communication medium, the series of image data from the remote image-forming apparatus, according to the operation mode.

8. (Original) An image-forming apparatus according to claim 7, further comprising a printing unit adapted to print the series of image data, acquired from the remote image-forming apparatus by the acquisition unit, in accordance with the operation mode data acquired from the remote image-forming apparatus in association with the series of image data.

9. (Original) An image-forming apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the printing unit prints out, through a storage unit adapted to store the image data, the series of image data from the remote image-forming apparatus.

10. (Original) An image-forming apparatus according to claim 9, further comprising an erase controller adapted to perform an erase process on a series of already printed image data stored in the storage unit, in response to an end of the printing of the series of image data by the printing unit.

11. (Original) An image-forming apparatus according to claim 8, further comprising a code input unit adapted to input codes, and a print controller adapted to determine whether to execute printing of the series of image data through the printing unit, based on a code input through the code input unit.

12. (Original) An image-forming apparatus according to claim 8, further comprising:

a determination unit adapted to determine whether a process in accordance with the operation mode data acquired from the remote image-forming apparatus through the acquisition unit is executable; and

an update control unit adapted to automatically update the operation mode data acquired from the remote image-forming apparatus through the acquisition unit, in response to a determination result provided by the determination unit, and to perform a print process in accordance with the updated operation mode.

13. (Original) An image-forming apparatus according to claim 8, further comprising an update controller adapted to update the operation mode data acquired from the remote image-forming apparatus through the acquisition unit, in response to an instruction from a user, and to perform a print process in accordance with the updated operation mode.

14. (Original) An image-forming apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the transmitter unit transmits, to the remote image-forming apparatus via the data communication medium, a data request requesting that the remote image-forming apparatus erase the series of image data thereof corresponding to the operation mode data acquired from the remote image-forming apparatus through the acquisition unit.

15. (Original) An image-forming apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the transmitter unit transmits, to the remote image-forming apparatus via the data communication medium, a data request requesting that the remote image-forming apparatus update the operation mode data acquired from the remote image-forming apparatus by the acquisition unit.

16. (Original) An image-forming apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the remote image-forming apparatus comprises a storage unit that includes a plurality of storage areas and stores, in the areas, image data to be printed, with different pieces of the image data stored from area to area.

17. (Original) An image-forming apparatus according to claim 16, further comprising a storage area selection unit adapted to select a desired storage area from among the plurality of the storage areas in the storage unit in the remote image-forming apparatus,
wherein the acquisition unit acquires, from the remote image-forming apparatus via the data communication medium, a series of image data within a storage area selected by the storage area selection unit, from among the plurality of the storage areas.

18. (Original) An image-forming apparatus according to claim 5, further comprising:

a searching unit adapted to search for a remote image-forming apparatus that communicates data; and

an image-forming apparatus selection unit adapted to select a desired image-forming apparatus from among candidates in a search result provided by the searching unit,

wherein the transmitter unit transmits the data request via the data communication medium to the image-forming apparatus selected by the image-forming apparatus selection unit, and

the acquisition unit acquires, via the data communication medium, data from the remote image-forming apparatus selected by the image-forming apparatus selection unit.

19. (Original) An image-forming apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the remote image-forming apparatus stores a series of image data from a host computer.

20. (Original) An image-forming apparatus according to claim 19, wherein the remote image-forming apparatus stores a series of image data from the host computer, in association with operation mode data set in the host computer.

21. (Original) An image-forming apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the operation mode data comprises a plurality of pieces of setting data about a number of copies, a size of copy sheets, and a discrimination between one-side printing and both-side printing.

22. (Currently Amended) A method of controlling an image-forming system comprising a plurality of image-forming apparatuses with printing units, each image-forming apparatus comprising (a) a network communication unit and (b) a storage unit adapted to store image data and operation mode data received through the network communication unit, the method comprising:

an acquisition step of acquiring the image data and the operation mode data, stored in another image-forming apparatus of the plurality of image-forming apparatuses into a first image-forming apparatus of the plurality of image-forming apparatuses through the network communication unit, according to a request from a user of the first image-forming apparatus, the request being made by the user of the first image-forming apparatus via a user interface that displays to the user information about the image data stored in the another image-forming apparatus, the information being obtained from the another image-forming apparatus in response to use by the user of the user interface; and

an updating step of automatically updating an operation mode of the first image-forming apparatus to an operation mode in accordance with the acquired operation mode data.

23. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium storing a software program to be executed by an image-forming system comprising a plurality of image-forming apparatuses with printing units, each image-forming apparatus comprising (a) a network communication unit and (b) a storage unit adapted to store image data and operation mode data received through the network communication unit, the software program comprising:

program code for an acquisition step of acquiring the image data and the operation mode data, stored in another image-forming apparatus, of the plurality of image-forming apparatuses, into a first image-forming apparatus of the plurality of image-forming apparatuses through the network communication unit, according to a request from a user of said first image-forming apparatus, the request being made by the user of the first image-forming apparatus via a user interface that displays to the user information about the image data stored in the another image-forming apparatus, the information being obtained from the another image-forming apparatus in response to use by the user of the user interface; and

program code for an updating step of automatically updating an operation mode of the first image-forming apparatus to an operation mode in accordance with the acquired operation mode data.

24. (Currently Amended) A data processing method comprising:
a displaying step of displaying to a user of a first image-forming apparatus, information about the image data stored in a remote image-forming apparatus, the information being obtained from the remote image-forming apparatus in response to use by the user of the first image-forming apparatus of a user interface, and for prompting the user of the first

image-forming apparatus to select ~~therefrom~~ image data stored in the remote image-forming apparatus for printing by the first image-forming apparatus;

a transmitting step of transmitting, to the remote image-forming apparatus storing image data for printing, via a data communication medium, a data request requesting the remote image-forming apparatus to transmit image data stored therein, according to a request from the user of the first image forming apparatus; and

an acquisition step of acquiring, via the data communication medium, data output by the remote image-forming apparatus in response to the data request, the data including operation mode data preset for the image data stored in the remote image-forming apparatus.

25. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium storing a software program, the program comprising:

program code for a displaying step of displaying, to a user of a first image-forming apparatus, information about image data stored in a remote image-forming apparatus, the information being obtained from the remote image-forming apparatus in response to use by the user of the first image-forming apparatus of a user interface, and for prompting the user of the first image-forming apparatus to select ~~therefrom~~ image data stored in the remote image-forming apparatus for printing by the first image-forming apparatus;

program code for a transmitting step of transmitting, to the remote image-forming apparatus storing image data for printing, via a data communication medium, a data request requesting the remote image-forming apparatus to transmit image data stored therein, according to a request from the user of the first image forming apparatus; and

program code for an acquisition step of acquiring, via the data communication medium, data output by the remote image-forming apparatus in response to the data request, the data including operation mode data preset for the image data stored in the remote image-forming apparatus.